

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument/
Saddle Mountain NWR
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News Release



June 30, 2003

SERVICE ANNOUNCES FIRE PREVENTION ORDER

Special fire restrictions are in effect for all lands managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service within the Hanford Reach National Monument/Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge including the Wahluke Wildlife Recreation Area due to the very high to extreme fire danger in the area. Higher than normal spring precipitation has produced an increase in the combustible fuel load, resulting in a greater chance for severe wildfire.

No building, maintaining, attending or using fire, including campfires, warming fires and cooking fires including both charcoal briquette and gas stoves will be allowed any where on refuge lands. Smoking outside of an enclosed vehicle is prohibited. Fireworks are strictly prohibited.

Violation of these prohibitions may be punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment of not more than 12 months. In some cases both punishments may be applied and in addition, applicable county ordinances may be applied to the violations. These prohibitions, pursuant to 50 CFR 27.95, will become effective at 12:01 AM on June 30, 2003 and will remain in effect until further notice.

For more information contact Ron Crouse, Information and Education Specialist or Eric Hagen, Fire Management Officer at (509) 371-1801.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 535 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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